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Venezuela delays Chavez inauguration as crisis deepens

CARACAS (AFP) - Ailing President Hugo Chavez cannot return home in time for his inauguration on Thursday and so will take the oath of office at a later date before the Supreme Court, the government announced.

The announcement con-

firms that Chavez, 58, is too sick to make it back in time for the January 10 inauguration came in a letter to the National Assembly from Vice President Nicolas Maduro.

Continued on pg 6

OIL PRODUCT PRICES
Department of Economic, Commerce and Industrial Affairs

Minister of Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs announces that as of **January 9, 2013** the oil product prices will be the following:

Gasoline unleaded-premium	218,8 cent p/ltr. (- 1,4 cent)
Diesel LS	206,4 cent p/ltr. (- 1,2 cent)
Kerosine	199,7 cent p/ltr. (- 0,5 cent)

The above mentioned prices include BBO.

ATA announces: Aruba's tourism year ends with excellent growth in December 2012

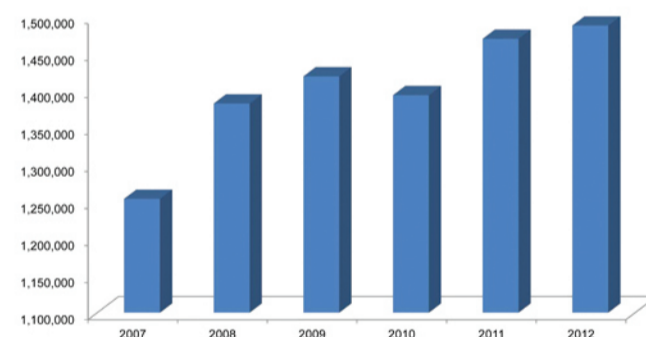


Aruba's Minister of Tourism, Transport and Labor, Otmar Oduber, was joined by CEO of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA), Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes in conveying the final statistics for Aruba's tourism performance for 2012. They were joined by Joanne Arends of the Aruba Airport Authority (AAA) yesterday morning for a press conference in the official government press room in Oranjestad.

December of last year proved a particularly encouraging month with an increase in arrivals of 10.9% over the last month of 2011. This pushed the overall annual growth to 4.1% over 2011, despite extreme loss of arrivals due to the occurrence of Hurricane Sandy in October. Aruba welcomed 8,827 more visitors in December 2012 than the year before.

2012 also experienced the highest overall number of visitors since 2007; Aruba welcomed 906,099 stay over visitors. Cruise ship arrivals were down from 2011 by 3%, largely due to 15 cancelled calls from January through April due technical issues and weather, and a record-breaking month for cruise arrivals in March of 2011 of 110,363, compared to 84,628 for March of this year.

Total Arrivals 2007 – 2012 (Cruise and Stay-over):
2012: 1,488,210 stay-over 906,099 / cruise 582,111



Though there were decreased arrivals during "high season," the "low season" summer and fall cruise ship arrivals increased by 21%. The large in-

crease in stay over visitors balances this out, to result in the 4.1% overall tourism growth figures for 2012.

Continue on pg 2

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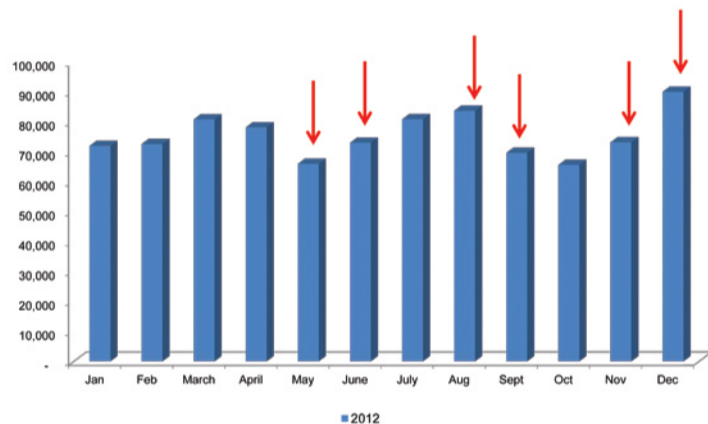
ATA announces: Aruba's tourism year ends with excellent growth in December 2012

Continued from pg 1

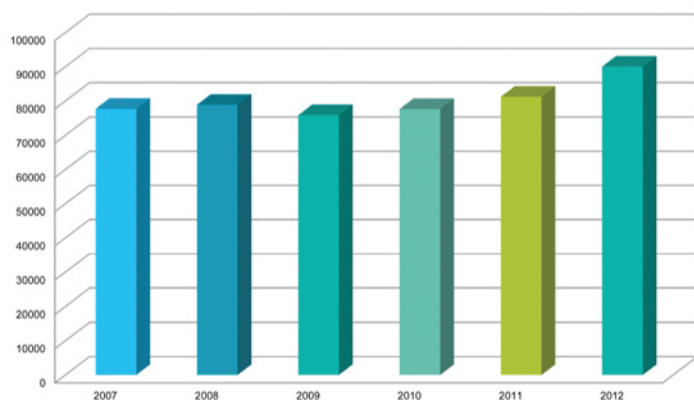
Taking into consideration contracts for increased calls at Oranjestad Harbor, cruise ship arrivals are projected to grow in 2013 to 729, 831 visitors

over 582,111 in 2012. This is broken down into a projected increase of 3.82% in high season and 189% increase of 122,312 during low season.

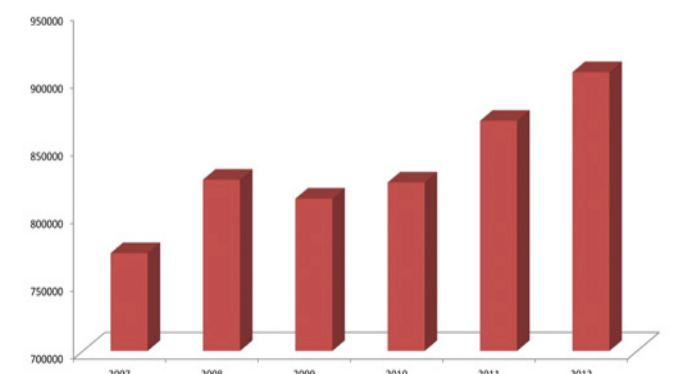
Record breaking months 2000 - 2012: May, June, August, September, November and December



Record Breaking December: 2012: up 10.9% 90,054 visitors



Total Stay-over visitors 2007 - 2012: up 4.1% 906,099 visitors



Overall growth in December was shown in all three of Aruba's major markets, the U.S., Latin America and Europe. Reduced arrivals from Holland and England were balanced out by substantial increases from Scandinavia and Italy. Increasing airlift between emerging strong Latin American economies such as Chile and Argentina has helped to establish the popularity of Aruba in those countries.

The northeast U.S. still remains Aruba's principal market, with over 60% coming from that area.

Ms. Arends advised that 2012 was a banner year for arrivals of paying passengers through Reina Beatrix International Airport, and increased airlift and routes will produce 8096 more seats bringing vacationers and business people to Aruba during the winter months of 2012-2013, over the previous year.

Minister Oduber credits the Aruba Tourism Authority's tireless efforts and innovative team with Aruba's increasing tourism growth despite a generally sluggish economy, and election year in the U.S., and a major natural disaster. "We believe Aruba's "One Happy Island" continues to be associated with guaranteed quality and value as a destination," commented Ms. Tjin Ajoë-Croes. "Our beautiful resorts and dedication has earned us this reputation, assisted by the consistent and positive word-of-mouth promotion we receive from satisfied tourists."

"The Ministry of Tourism will continue to strive to stimulate new markets, provide means to maintain the quality of Aruba's tourism product, and keep interest high in Aruba as a destination," concluded Minister Oduber.

By Rosalie Klein

Flexible tax payment plan extended to December 2013

At the beginning of 2012, the Tax Bureau had decided to introduce a flexible payment plan for all customers. This applied to both individuals as well as to companies who were in arrears with their tax payments. Said flexible plan actually expired on December 31st, 2012. However, in view of the positive reaction to the measure, the Bureau decided to prolong the flexible payment plan through to December 31st, 2013.

The Benefits:

The flexible payment plan includes the following benefits:


1. Longer payment terms
2. Possibility to reduce fines
3. Possibility to not have to pay a portion of accumulated interests
4. To put a hold on future interest calculations during payment arrangement period
5. To put a hold on all col-

lection proceedings: clients will not receive court orders, or mandates on salary withholdings, as long as they are complying with the payment arrangement and that the client is not trying to mislead or jeopardize the government's coffers.

Act Now:

Everyone is advised to not allow tax debts to accumulate. This becomes much more difficult to pay in the future. The flexible payment arrangement is one way to easily eliminate taxes in arrears and obtain the opportunity to reduce the size of the debt considerably. Hence, act now by calling the Tax Bureau and make an appointment. Call 522-7423 and give them your "persoonsnummer."

For more detailed information you may go online and visit www.siad.aw.



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Dutch priest to display photos of Church quitters

THE HAGUE (AFP) - A Roman Catholic priest in the Netherlands is to put on display the names and photographs of parish members trying to leave the Church in a bid to get them to stay.

"This is a large parish, and I don't know everyone: by putting up the photos I thought someone might recognise someone they know who they could try to make stay in the Church," priest Harm Schilder told AFP on Tuesday.

Many Catholics in the liberal Netherlands were shocked by Pope Benedict XVI's Christmas call to "fight" gay marriage, which the Netherlands was the first country to legalise in 2001.

Schilder said that he had received four requests to leave the Church around Christmas.

"This isn't about pointing a finger, naming and shaming," said Schilder, insisting that the plan would help the community pray for these people not to leave the Church and perhaps "persuade them to stay".

Calendar dedicated to Musicians presented to Prime Minister



On Monday morning the Prime Minister of Aruba received a visit from Nelson Thiel, executive of The National Archives, to present him with another calendar that Thiel has recently published.

Nelson Thiel has previously published calendars dedicated to Farmers and

Fishermen, as well as one dedicated to our local classic automobiles. This time, Thiel decided to print his sixth local calendar and purposed to dedicate this 2013 edition to Aruban musicians. The Prime Minister had the honor of receiving the very first copy.

Thiel explained that in

preparation for this calendar his focus was primarily on musicians of the past. The list of musicians is obviously much longer than those included in the calendar. The cover of the calendar portrays instruments dating back to 1885 when Pastor Koolwijk took their museum to Holland. He also focused on the 5 stringed guitar made with the Calabas and crafted in Aruba. The first photo compiled is of the Rufo Wever group "Los Trovadores Tropicales" founded in 1935 when Carlos Gardel visited Aruba. Members of that group back then dressed in Cuban style outfits. The members of the group were well-known players and singers, such as: Betico Croes, Watty Vos, Andresito Bikker, Juancho Kock and many others. There were musical groups like: Zorzas, Superior, RCA, Casino, Juan Serano and his Caribbean Combo, (Jan Vlijt), Happy Hit, Los Duques, Estrella Musical and several others. There was also Steelband, Beatband, Trio, Tipico, Mariachi, Caha di Orgel, Aquinaldo and Dande. The calendar is dedicated to musicians of the past as well as to our current musicians.

Aruba Marriot also Special Toy Drive



In the month of December, Cliff Faldman decided to initiate a special Toy Drive on Aruba for the children of Breezy Point, New York. Hurricane Sandy you remember had gone through Breezy Point and devastated the area burning down 111 homes leaving many families homeless.

Various businesses on Aruba supported the Toy Drive. The Aruba Marriott Resort decided that they too would join the Toy Drive. This was especially because a large percentage of their

visitors come from the US and they felt they could not go without contributing to this beautiful cause.

Aruba Marriott Resort collected 30 toys which were bought by their own employees at Top 1 Toys. The toys were submitted to the dynamic team of the New York Fire Brigade, who in turn ensured that the toys got to the children at Breezy Point.

This was a rather unique and special occasion which they are certain brought much joy and contentment to the many children who suffered such great loss.

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"Exclusive coverage the Golden Globes Awards"

"Interview with Leonardo DiCaprio by Noel de Souza"

THE MORNING NEWS is proud to welcome a series of exclusive interviews from Special Guest Correspondent Noel de Souza. Noel is an actor and journalist, and a member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, as a correspondent for The Times of India. As one of the planners of the upcoming Golden Globe Awards 2013, which will be broadcast live this Sunday, January 13, he has a unique perspective on this glittering event, considered a "predictor" of who will claim the Oscars later this year. TMN very pleased to feature this exclusive interview with famed actor Leonardo DiCaprio.

Interview: Leonardo DiCaprio-----Noel de Souza

NdS: The late Sir Laurence Olivier (Lord Larry) the iconic British actor who had every accolade bestowed upon him and was the foremost interpreter of Shakespeare, once said "There are no small parts, only small actors"

It takes a fearless, confident and established leading actor of stature to tackle not only a small part but also the part of a villain. Leonardo DiCaprio does just that in the Quentin Tarantino directed "Django Unchained".

What made you accept this minor but pivotal role in the film?

LC: I've wanted to work with Quentin for along time. He's a writer-director who encompasses you in the worlds he creates and they are of his own creation, his dialogue is so unbelievably juicy and creative. The characters he creates are just so fantastic. So I had been talking to him about doing other movies in the past, then this one came along and I think my name was mentioned to him, this was the one that finally made sense to him. I knew that I could work well together with him and in our early talks we really took the character to a different level. Quentin is the type of director who is completely open to ideas, he'll not only embrace them but will



Leonardo DiCaprio in Django Unchained

go to the utter extreme with them and those are the type of directors that I like to work with, ones that love that collaborative process, so it was great to work with him in that respect.

NdS: What makes Quentin so unique?

LC: It's his appreciation of cinema. He loves these different genres and the fact that he plays with all of them. He has a catalogue of films in his mind, he draws upon the past and creates his own genre, he's his own individual film-maker, incredibly unique. When you're seeing a Tarantino movie you are going to see something special, something incredibly imaginative and something ballsy and daring.

NdS: In the movie there's a scene in which you are ini-

tiating and watching a blood sport. Are you a sports fan?

LC: I prefer basketball, mixed martial -arts, those are the sports that I like to watch. To tell you the truth I'm not an avid sports nut. I don't know much about football and very little about baseball, but I do watch baseball, I'm very specific with that. I'd say that I love sports as much as the next guy but I'm not your typical sports nut.

NdS: I hear that you dye your sneakers some times?

LC: I do. I dye them too, yeah, that's my other thing.

NdS: You have done three movies back to back. Now what's next?

LC: I have a clean slate for the next year, because this has been a very unique year for me. I had too many good opportunities that I couldn't

pass up. They are all role that I really, really wanted to play. I usually have a lot more time between films. When you go from film to film you're constantly playing, you have no time to stop and reflect, but it does keep you in good acting shape.

NdS: What do you intend to do with that year of?

LC: I do want to dedicate a lot of this next year not only taking some time to reflect on everything but also getting back into doing more environmental work. I have a few things lined up that are going to be very important for me and my foundation. I plan to travel and get even more involved with those issues. That is a big goal of mine next year in addition to getting some rest, and getting to see my friends again.

NdS: Talking about taking time off and getting involved once again in environmental issues, I'd like to ask you about your calibration with Tag Hauer?

LC: The collaboration is great between Tag and me, they are a company that practices what they preach, they have reconstructed all their offices to be powered by solar. They are a company that does give back. I wanted to work with them on that specific watch that we worked on that's going to benefit all different charities

that my foundation is a part of. They understand the issues that are facing the planet today and they wanted to be a part of doing something unique so I hope to continue working with them. We've gotten to give a lot of funding to different issues so far, They are a good company and I intend to continue my collaboration with them.

NdS: What does time mean to you?

LC: Time is of the essence every single day isn't it? So to get a little time off to be on your own and involved in reflection is a luxury.

NdS: What else would you say is luxury for you?

LC: Taking time to be in nature to be in the woods and having the time to go deep sea diving. I love diving, it's one of my favorite things to do in life.

I've been to a lot of different places around the world and sought out different coral reefs and different species to see under water. It's a whole new experience when you're down there. You really disconnect from earth and you're in almost a dream world, it's like somebody made it up in a cartoon like CGI some times it's that beautiful.

NdS: After a hard days work how do you relax?

LC: By taking a long shower.

Continued on pg 5

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"Exclusive coverage the Golden Globes Awards"

Continued from pg 4

NdS: What would you say is your favorite food?

LC: Pasta is my favorite food even though every one's not eating carbs nowadays.

NdS: Where would you say that you are most comfortable?

LC: When I'm in the woods alone far away from civilization.

NdS: You seem to enjoy solitude. Do you ever have people over to your home for dinner or some such thing?

LC: Yes, I love to have friends over. I have Christmas parties and things like that. But to tell you the truth I haven't really been home for a year and a half so I don't even remember the last time I had people over to my house. So now I'm looking forward to Christmas when I can finally have friends over to my house.

Djamgo Unchained. The theme of the movie in part is about racism in the south during the days of slavery. But that theme could be carried out to day, because racism does exist.

Yes it is rampant not only in the states but throughout

the world and has been historically that way. I don't have any answers but just yesterday I was having a conversation and this is not necessarily my thought process on the subject. We were talking about the Neanderthal and us, the Cro-Magnons and how essentially we wiped that entire subspecies of man away. As much as the Neanderthal was thought to be a barbaric subspecies of man they were a good natured, peaceful tribe of people. It was some thing about us that wanted to not only consume our environment but we had some thing in us that had an appetite for war, an appetite for fighting one another and that's the reason we wiped them off the face of this earth. There's some thing in us that is inherently good but there's also an inherent need to fight one another. I don't have an answer to these things but all I'm going to say is that as we evolve hopefully that other part of our brain will take over and do what John Lennon eventually wanted; living in a world where there is no war and

there's peace and we can all get along and hopefully that day will come

An interesting thing is when you look at all the species, any species on earth whether it be ants or locusts or whatever, there's are fundamental characteristics in them and those are opportunism and greed and those are the ones that have survived. When you think that we are this evolved species that we would be able to rationalize that and put that in a corner and move forward, but that's the great journey of our species I suppose.

Leonardo has been nominated for a Golden Globe as a supporting actor for his role in Django unchained.



Cuba's sports stars won't score freedom to travel

HAVANA (AFP) - Most Cubans next week will have the right to travel without government permission for the first time in decades, but sports stars will still require permission to leave, an official said Tuesday.

"Professionals who are deemed essential, technicians, sports people, and (Communist Party) staff and leaders" have been informed that they still face curbs on foreign travel, said Lamberto Fraga, a high-ranking Migration and Foreign Nationals' Ministry official, and they will need a special permit.

"This group of people will be told why they cannot leave the country, and they likely understand that they are essential, which should keep them from going to seek a passport, unless they have authorization" to travel abroad, Fraga said on state television.

It was announced on Monday that doctors were not included in the group of professionals the government considers essential, but authorities did not immediately list all professionals who would be.

Cuba, the Americas' only Communist-ruled nation, is a

regional sports power. Havana came in 16th place in the London Olympics in terms of total medal take.

It also faces a constant loss of its sports stars, deserting at international meets or on trips. Professional sports do not exist in Cuba.

The government announced October 16 that Cubans, starting January 14, no longer will need the reviled exit visas that have kept most in this country of 11 million from ever traveling abroad.

The visas, and invitation letters from a host, cost up to \$200 in a country with an average monthly salary of less than \$20.

Cubans are intensely and emotionally keen for migration reform, which has been promised but not yet delivered by President Raul Castro, 81, who took over from his brother revolutionary icon Fidel Castro in July 2006.

Separate from requests for US immigration visas, the United States gives any Cuban who reaches US soil - by boat, land or air -- immediate residency and working rights, something it does not do for citizens of any other country.



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Clinton to testify on Benghazi on January 22

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will appear before US lawmakers on January 22 to be quizzed about a damning inquiry into a deadly militant attack on a US mission in Libya, a senator said Tuesday.

Clinton had initially been due to testify to US lawmakers in late December after the scathing probe blamed "grossly inadequate" security at the diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, eastern Libya, for failing to protect staff there.

But she was forced to cancel her testimony and send in her two deputy secretaries instead when she fell ill with a virulent stomach bug, and later suffered a concussion and blood clot.

Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed when hordes of heavily-armed militants overran the compound and a nearby annex on September 11, unleashing a bloody and terrifying eight-hour assault.

Senator Bob Corker, ranking Republican member of

the Senate Foreign Relations committee, told MSNBC television he had been in discussions with Clinton's top aides about setting a new date for her to testify.

"My sense is her hearing probably will take place the morning of the 22nd," Corker said.

"She's anxious to want to come up and testify on Benghazi, and I think that's an important thing both for her and for our entire country."

Clinton returned to work on Monday after a month-long absence, and is busy drawing up her schedule for her final weeks in office.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland reiterated Tuesday that the plan was for Clinton to testify about the Benghazi attack while still in post, and before a confirmation hearing for veteran senator John Kerry.

President Barack Obama has tapped Kerry to replace Clinton, who will be stepping down after four years in office, but his nomination requires Senate confirmation.

Venezuela delays Chavez inauguration as crisis deepens

Continued from pg 1

(AFP)--"According to the recommendation of the medical team... the process of post-operative recover must extend beyond January 10 of the current year, reason for which he he will not be able to appear on that date before the National Assembly," said the letter, read out by National Assembly speaker Diosdado Cabello.

The letter went on to say that, in keeping with article 231 of the constitution, Chavez would take the oath before the Supreme Court at a later day.

The long-expected decision came amid a storm of controversy over whether his current term can be extended beyond January 10, and calls by the opposition for the Supreme Court to intervene.

"I do not know what the judges of the Supreme Court are waiting for. Right now in Venezuela, without any doubt whatsoever, a constitutional conflict has arisen," opposition leader and former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles said.

The government says the swearing-in is a mere formality that can be delayed, but the opposition says he must at least be declared temporarily incapacitated and replaced on an interim basis by the National Assembly speaker.

The charter also says new elections must be held within 30 days if the president-elect or president dies or is permanently incapacitated either before he takes office or in the first four years of his six-year term.

"There must be a response from our institutions in the face of this conflict," said Capriles, who lost to Chavez in October by an 11-percent margin but gave him the toughest political fight of his 14-year tenure.

Capriles also urged Latin American leaders -- Chavez has long been the figurehead of the anti-US left in the region -- to stay away from a rally convened by the government for Thursday in place of the inauguration.

So far Uruguay's President Jose Mujica, Bolivia's President Evo Morales and Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino of Ecuador are the only ones to confirm their attendance.

"Chavez's health is no longer in our hands," said Mujica in an interview with the Montevideo newspaper La Republica. "Our function is to back the government and people of Venezuela."

Capriles urged regional leaders not to succumb to "a game by a political party" -- alluding to Venezuela's ruling party. He mentioned by name the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Bolivia and Ecuador.

Earlier, the country's main opposition coalition turned to international organizations for support.

It warned the Organization of American States of an "alteration of the constitutional order" if the government retains its grip on power regardless of Chavez being unable to take the oath of office.

In Washington, the State Department said Venezuelans should decide for themselves what to do without resorting to violence, calling for a "broad based discussion."

"And it needs to be decided in a manner that is free, fair, transparent, is seen as ensuring a level playing field in Venezuela," said State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland.

Information Minister Ernesto Villegas said late Monday that Chavez's medical condition had remained "stationary" since the latest complication from surgery was reported four days ago.

Chavez is suffering from a severe pulmonary infection that has resulted in a "respiratory insufficiency," officials have said.

The leftist government and the conservative opposition brandish conflicting interpretations of the constitution.

Chavez's allies call the president's swearing-in a "formality" that can be fulfilled sometime after January 10.

But, in a letter to OAS Secretary General Miguel Insulza, the head of the main opposition coalition, Ramon Avello, argued that under the constitution the current administration's term ends on January 10 and cannot be extended.

Egypt, Palestinian presidents, Hamas chief to meet: Cairo

CAIRO, Cyprus (AFP) - Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi will meet his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, and Hamas politburo chief Khaled Meshaal in Cairo on Wednesday, Morsi's office said.

Abbas and Meshaal will first "meet Egypt's intelligence chief before holding a three-way meeting with President Morsi," presidential spokesman Yasser Ali told AFP.

Azzam al-Ahmad, who is

in charge of reconciliation efforts between his Fatah party, of which Abbas is head, said Abbas was traveling to Egypt at Morsi's invitation to discuss the subject.

Meshaal and aides arrived in Cairo from Doha on Tuesday for a visit of several days, the official MENA news agency said.

Hamas and Fatah had been at loggerheads since the Islamist movement seized control of Gaza in June 2007, following its victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections the previous year.

Under Egyptian mediation, the two groups reached a unity agreement in April 2011, but the main provisions of that deal have so far not been implemented.

This will be the first meeting between Abbas and Meshaal hosted by the Egyptian president since he was elected in June of last year.

Oil exec warns taxes could sink US energy rebirth

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A top US oil industry figure warned Tuesday that the country's energy renaissance could be threatened by "punitive" tax policies on oil and gas exploration.

With the US government looking to remove tax breaks for big oil firms to help boost government revenues, Jack Gerard, the head of the American Petroleum Institute urged Washington to pursue policies favorable to energy production.

"The first, most important thing is to do no harm," Gerard told a roomful of policy makers, lobbyists and reporters in a luncheon speech.

"We pay more than our fair share."

Gerard, whose organization represents large oil and gas companies, emphasized that domestic energy production has been a bright spot in a weak economy and that there is potential for more growth ahead, if Washington plays its hands right.





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International News

Belgian bus carrying kids catches fire in Switzerland

GENEVA (AFP) - Tragedy was narrowly averted Tuesday when nearly 40 Belgian kids were evacuated from a burning bus near a Swiss tunnel, less than a year after 22 Belgian schoolchildren died in a horrific bus crash in the alpine country.

The 45 passengers, including 38 children aged 10 to 12, had been headed to a ski camp in northern Italy when the bus engine suddenly caught fire, police in the central canton of Uri said in a statement.

After discovering the flames at around 5:00 am (0400 GMT), the driver pulled over shortly before the Goeschenen entrance to the Gotthard road tunnel and evacuated the passengers.

Police, who have launched a probe to determine the cause of the blaze, said a replacement bus had taken the passengers on to Italy.

According to Belgium's Belga news agency, another bus from the same Belgian company, Les Autocars et Autobus Toussaint, had been driving behind the one that caught fire and the driver of the second bus had seen the flames and alerted his colleague to the danger.

The two drivers subdued the blaze until police and fire-fighters arrived at the scene, Belga reported.

The accident was eerily reminiscent of a Belgian bus crash in a Swiss alpine tunnel last March that killed 22 children and six adults.

The children who died were among 46 from two Belgian schools returning from a skiing holiday in the Alps. The adults were accompanying teachers and the two bus drivers.

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2012 warmest on record for US, had historic extremes

WASHINGTON (AFP) - 2012 marked the warmest year on record for the United States and was also the second most extreme weather year yet recorded, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Tuesday.

The hot weather contributed to a record drought

which, at its peak, parched 61 percent of the nation.

Those dry conditions helped spark massive wildfires which charred 9.2 million acres -- the third highest on record, NOAA said.

The nation suffered through 11 weather disasters that caused \$1 billion in damage, including hurricanes

Sandy and Isaac and tornado outbreaks in the Great Plains, Texas and Ohio Valley.

Every one of the 48 states in the continental United States had an above-average annual temperature in 2012 and 19 of those broke records.

The average temperature for 2012 was 55.3 F (12.9 C)

which is 3.2°F above the 20th century average, and 1.0°F above 1998, the previous warmest year.

The nationally-averaged precipitation total of 26.57 inches (67.5 centimeters) was 2.57 inches (6.5 centimeters) below average and the 15th driest year on record.

This was also the driest

year for the nation since 1988, when 25.25 inches (64.1 centimeters) of precipitation were observed.

Meanwhile, 2012 was the third year in a row with 19 named tropical storms, 10 of which packed hurricane strength. One was a major hurricane.

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EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

Health & Living

Natural birth a tough sell in China's caesarean boom

BEIJING (AFP) -- 'Chinese women are scared of pain' --

The proportion of Chinese mothers choosing caesareans more than doubled in less than a decade, from around 20 percent in 2001 to above 46 percent in 2008 -- and approaching two-thirds in cities, according to the latest World Health Organization figures for the country.

Across Asia caesarean rates have reached "epidemic levels", it said in a 2010 report.

Experts say that caesareans are necessary in many cases when a mother or baby has a health condition which would make a natural birth risky, but that the risks of elective oper-

ations are often greater than the benefits.

China's "one child" family planning policy also plays a role, as parents with more money to invest in their only childbirth are more likely to splash out on the procedure, which they see as safer, Tang said.

"There are a lot of perceptions that if you have natural delivery it will affect your sex life," he added.

Some local governments in China have launched campaigns to promote natural birth, he said, but there is no clear central government policy on the issue.

In an attempt to encourage women to choose a natural

birth, the Antai hospital offers water births and teaches expectant mothers hypnosis techniques to deal with the pain of labour.

It also charges just as much for natural childbirth as it does for a caesarean, removing incentives for doctors to promote the operation.

As one incentive a red carpet runs from the delivery room towards a series of recovery suites, including the western-themed White House, a room aimed at Muslims called the "Islamabad Palace," and a chamber inspired by Mongolian warlord Genghis Khan.

US Supreme Court leaves stem cell research alone

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US Supreme Court declined Monday to enter the emotionally-charged debate over stem cell research, refusing to hear an appeal centered on the issue of federal government funding.

The top US court did not give a reason for its decision, which ends the long judicial saga over President Barack Obama's 2009 executive order lifting restrictions on financing imposed by his predecessor George W. Bush.

The appeal had come from two researchers working with adult cells rather than embryonic stem cells.

They had asked the Supreme Court to halt financing for stem cell research on the grounds that federal law banned the creation and destruction of embryos for scientific study.

Stem cell research is said to be promising for finding new treatments for a variety of diseases.

A federal judge banned the financing in 2010, but an appeals court in Washington re-

versed the ruling in 2012. The court said the federal ban does not apply to previously existing embryos that resulted from in vitro fertilization procedures.

Government financing through the National Institutes of Health was authorized for cells from frozen embryos that were left over from fertility treatments.

The NIH, which allowed researchers to use stem cells derived from donated frozen embryos no longer needed for fertility treatments, hailed the ruling.

"This decision allows the ruling to stand, and enables NIH to continue conducting and funding stem cell research," NIH Director Francis Collins said in a statement.

"Patients and their families who look forward to new therapies to replace cells lost by disease or injury, or who may benefit from new drugs identified by screening using stem cells, should be reassured that NIH will continue supporting this promising research."

Japanese teen commits suicide after coach abuse

TOKYO (AFP) - A Japanese high school student killed himself after suffering repeated abuse by his basketball coach, officials said Tuesday.

The 17-year-old, who was found hanging in his room two days before Christmas, left a suicide note saying he had taken his life after being beaten by the unnamed coach, according to education authorities in the western city of Osaka.

The 47-year-old coach admitted to beating the boy and apologised to his family in the wake of his death, local media reports said, adding that police

were questioning the man.

Japan, with a population of about 128 million, has one of the world's highest suicide rates, with more than 30,000 people taking their lives annually.

Rising unemployment, family troubles and health problems are cited as key factors behind many of the suicides.

The case of a 13-year-old boy who leapt to his death from an apartment building in 2011 gained national prominence after a pupil survey reportedly revealed he was subjected to a litany of abuse by bullies.

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Sci-Tech

Samsung offers two shows at once on new OLED tv



LAS VEGAS (AFP) - South Korean electronics giant Samsung Monday unveiled a new television that lets two people watch two different shows at the same time.

The F9500 television is the first in the world to offer this feature, dubbed "multi-view," the company said in Las Vegas, attributing the advance to the use of the latest generation of screen technology called "organic light-emitting diode" or OLED.

The feature allows two people "to watch completely different Full-HD content simultaneously on the same screen with corresponding audio and controls," the company said on the eve of the 2013 Consumer Electronics Show, the world's biggest for the electronics trade.

Joe Stinziano, a senior Samsung official in the US, emphasized at a press conference that "it's only possible in OLED due to the very fast

speed" at which images can move across the screen with the technology.

So that they see just the show they want, the two viewers must wear special 3D glasses, which come with personal speakers built in to deliver the audio, in stereo, directly to them.

OLED TVs don't require separate backlights and thus are thinner, consume about 20 percent less power and offer a sharper picture than conventional flat-panel sets.

Samsung's South Korean rival, LG, has so far been the only company to launch a line of OLED television for commercial sale.

LG's OLED model, 55 inches wide but just 0.16 inches (four mm) thick, was opened for pre-orders last week, with the whopping price tag of 11 million won (\$10,357). It will start shipping in late March.

Samsung hasn't indicated the price or release date of its television, which will also be 55 inches.

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Videogames coming to a cloud near you



LAS VEGAS, (AFP) - Videogames are moving further into the Internet cloud with new devices and services unveiled at the big Consumer Electronics Show this week.

One major step came from computer graphics giant and chipmaker Nvidia, which announced agreements with six cloud gaming companies to deliver games to global broadband companies.

This will allow gamers to play on any screen -- including smart TVs, PCs, tablets and smartphones.

The platform can serve more HD-quality game streams with improved speeds, according to Nvidia.

Initial partners include US-based Agawi, China's Cloud Union and Cyber Cloud Technologies, Japan's G-cluster Global, Playcast Media Systems of Israel and Ubitus of Taiwan.

Ubitus meanwhile unveiled a separate agreement to bringing console and multiplayer

games to Google TV.

"Google TV is an ideal platform for cloud gaming and we have tackled the obstacles to achieving low latency streaming game experience with multi gaming controller devices support on Google TV," said Wesley Kuo, chief executive of Ubitus.

The move to cloud gaming poses challenges to the traditional model of console games where users purchase a specific product.

Despite the shift, new consoles are being introduced including the latest Nintendo Wii, and upgraded versions of Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PS3 are on the horizon.

According to Forrester Research, some 66 million US households will access the Internet via game consoles, Blu-ray players, or connected HDTVs by 2017. Forrester's Jitender Miglani said consoles are still playing a role but one that is changing in gaming.



LAS VEGAS : Panasonic's incoming president and chief executive Kazuhiro Tzuga (L) and introduces the new 4Kn OLED TV at the 2013 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas on January 8, 2013. The annual CES which takes place from January 8-11 is a place where industry manufacturers, advertisers and tech-minded consumers converge to get a taste of new gadgets and innovations coming to the market each year.

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CHECK, PLEASE

ACROSS

1. "Who'll ____ the Rain"
5. Scour
10. Hefty competitor
14. Stylist's focus
15. All, in Abruzzo
16. "The Purple ____ of Cairo"
17. A Guthrie
18. Spinning
19. Hunger (for)
20. Shipping forms
22. Shaving bowl residual
24. ____-deucy
25. Excellent
26. Furniture wheel
29. TV control
33. Cantered
34. Shallow-draft

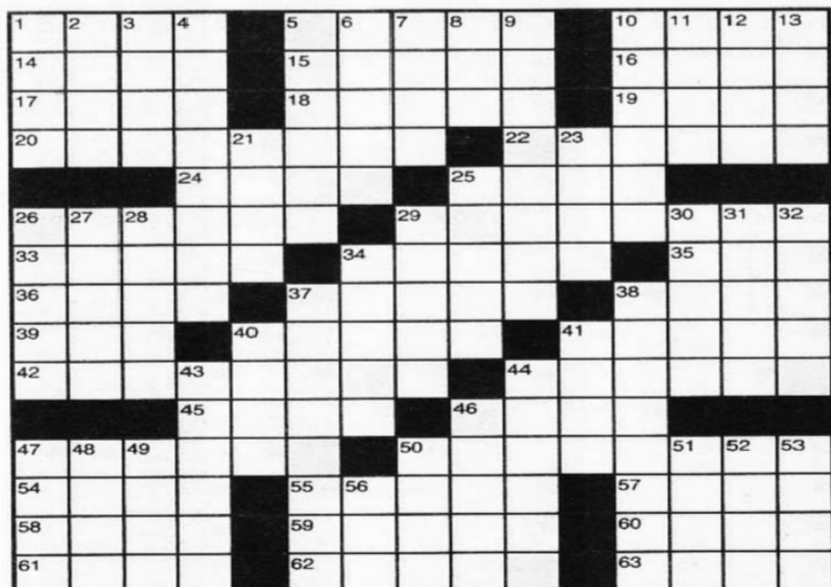
vessel

35. Grassy spot
36. Tram cargos
37. He played Gump
38. Loafer coin
39. R.R. depot
40. Stable locks
41. Extra-bad
42. Jewelry items
44. Summertime top
45. Cutlass maker, for short
46. "The ____ Jar" (Plath)
47. Sot's debt
50. Large numbers
54. It was, in Caesar's time
55. "____ Care"
57. Departure door

DOWN

1. GBS
2. Figure skater Lipinski
3. Like a pizza eater's hands
4. Processes a will
5. More hackneyed
6. Like a pig's tail
58. Heche of "Men in Trees"
59. Thrust forward
60. Gambling mecca
61. "____ Time on Planet Earth" (1988 film)
62. Friendless one
63. Good weather in Stowe

7. Roads: abbr.
8. Great Basin tribe
9. Montana city
10. Kitchen scraper
11. Lake, to a Highlander
12. Athlete-author Arthur
13. Doe, e.g.
21. Glacé
23. Start the pot
25. Branches out
26. Accessible
27. Major artery
28. Asparagus piece
29. Vaudeville props
30. What a sentry must be
31. Awareness
32. Snuffy Smith's son
34. Knocks loudly
37. Distributed announcement
38. Miners
40. "____ 18"
41. "____ Street Week"
43. Lower than low
44. "____ Skelter"
46. Toot
47. Wampum unit
48. River to the Ligurian Sea
49. Indian queen
50. Beethoven's birthplace
51. Bovine animals
52. Señora's boy
53. Pack
56. Batman and Robin, e.g.



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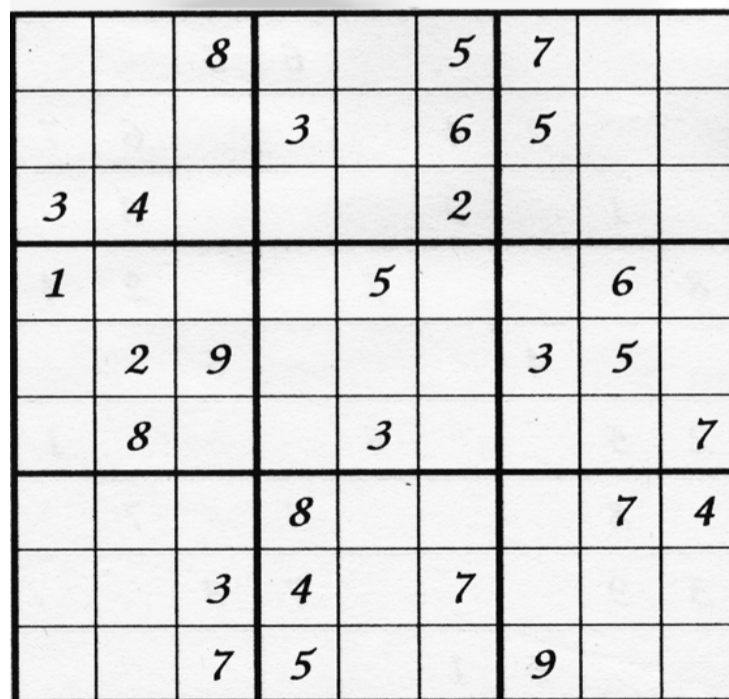
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

8	6	1	2	5	7	9	4	3
5	2	1	4	9	6	8	3	7
4	9	6	8	3	5	2	7	1
1	7	6	5	2	9	8	3	4
8	5	4	1	9	6	2	7	3
6	9	2	8	5	4	7	1	3
9	6	8	2	1	5	7	4	3
1	7	5	9	8	6	2	7	4
2	5	1	6	3	8	9	4	7

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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Finance

OECD criticises Dutch lack of foreign bribery prosecutions

THE HAGUE (AFP) - The OECD criticised the Netherlands on Tuesday for not prosecuting successfully Dutch companies accused of bribery abroad.

An OECD working group voiced "serious concerns that the overall results of foreign bribery investigations and prosecutions to date are too low."

A report said that "no individual or company has been sanctioned for foreign bribery" since the Netherlands joined the international convention against bribing foreign officials in 2000.

The Dutch economy is based on trade, both imports and exports, notably through Europe's biggest port at Rotterdam.

The Netherlands is the world's eighth-biggest exporter.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development provides analysis and policy guidance for 34 industrialised countries.

The OECD said that of 22 foreign bribery allegation in the Netherlands, 14 had not led to investigations and only two to prosecutions, which are due to go on trial this year.

The report noted that of the 22 allegations, 12 involved so-called "mailbox companies" which are incorporated in the Netherlands but pursue their activities entirely from abroad.

The report questioned the Netherlands' "ability and proactivity in initiating proceedings" against such companies.

The more than 20,000 mailbox companies in the Netherlands provided the Dutch government with more than one billion euros (1.3 billion dollars) in tax revenue in 2009, the report said.

The working group said that the current level of sanctions awaiting those guilty of bribery in the Netherlands "is not sufficient".

However, it welcomed draft legislation to increase fines to 10 percent of a company's turnover.

The report did note positive steps taken in the Netherlands, including the development of expertise in confiscating criminal proceeds.

It also welcomed corruption awareness-raising activities by the foreign ministry through its embassies.

Euro unemployment hits 'unacceptable' high

BRUSSELS (AFP) - European unemployment has hit an unacceptable high, as one national leader put it on Tuesday, with dire figures in Spain highlighting a growing north-south divide that experts warn will only get worse.

The unemployment rate across the troubled 17-nation eurozone hit 11.8 percent in November, up from 11.7 percent in October, with the number of people out of work in the single currency area now nudging 19 million.

The 19th rise in a row for the eurozone, home to some 330 million people, represented an increase of more than two million on the dole compared with a year ago, according to data published by

the EU statistics service Eurostat.

London-based IHS Global Insight analyst Howard Archer calculated the cumulative increase since April 2011 as 3.278 million after another 113,000 people lost their jobs.

The jobless numbers exceeded 26 million for the first time across the full 27-member European Union, which includes Britain and Poland, but the EU as a whole posted an unchanged unemployment rate of 10.7 percent.

Such levels are "completely unacceptable," said Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, who currently holds the EU's rotating presidency, during a visit to Germany.

Eurostat figures showed

that more jobs were lost over the past year in the eurozone, at 2.015 million, than in the 27-member EU, where the number was slightly lower at 2.012 million.

Hit by a property market bust and riddled with bad debt in its banks, Spain recorded the highest unemployment rate of all European countries -- at 26.6 percent, worse even than bailed-out Greece.

Among under-25s, both those countries reported unemployment rates that hovered around 57 percent.

According to figures that were seasonally-adjusted for comparative purposes, the November unemployment rate in key rival economies was 7.8 percent for the United States and 4.1 percent for Japan.

"2012 has been another very bad year for Europe in terms of unemployment and the deteriorating social situation," said European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Laszlo Andor.

"The risk of poverty or exclusion is constantly growing," he said, warning that "most national welfare systems have lost much of their ability to protect household incomes."

He added "The divergence is especially striking between the north and the south of the eurozone."

Qatar raises financial aid to Egypt to \$5 bn

CAIRO (AFP) - Qatar said on Tuesday it will increase its financial aid to Egypt by \$2.5 billion to a total of \$5 billion, comprising an outright grant of \$1 billion and \$4 billion in bank deposits.

The financial lifeline comes as Egypt battles a currency crisis and seeks an IMF cash injection into its teetering economy of an almost equivalent amount.

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim told a Cairo press conference that the gas-rich emirate had doubled its previously announced aid, which comprised \$500 million as a grant and \$2 billion in bank deposits.

An IMF team is expected within weeks for further talks after a delegation headed by the monetary fund's Middle East director Ahmed Massood met with President Mohamed Morsi and other Egyptian officials on Monday.

The IMF, which was re-

ported to have pledged \$4.8 billion, "remained committed to supporting Egypt in confronting its economic challenges," said a statement by Prime Minister Hisham Qandil on Tuesday.

Egypt had expected the IMF loan, which would provide crucial encouragement for foreign investors in the restive market, in December or January, but weeks of sometimes deadly street clashes and protests postponed the aid.

Morsi's government has also temporarily balked at raising taxes and other measures of an economic reform programme in the face of simmering opposition ahead of parliamentary elections in two months.

Egypt's currency has plunged to a record low over the past week as the Central Bank began auctioning dollars to preserve dwindling foreign reserves.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

J	E	F	F	A	C	T	S	R	E	A	P
A	Z	U	R	B	R	U	T	E	E	R	L
M	I	L	O	T	O	T	A	L	S	I	T
B	O	L	L	S	C	U	B	E	S	T	E
C	I	T	E	S	V	I	A				
S	L	I	C	E	D	B	R	E	A	T	H
T	O	R	T	I	T	L	E	M	E	E	T
O	N	C	E	T	R	U	N	K	S	M	E
W	E	L	S	H	A	N	T	I	C	I	R
R	E	C	E	I	P	T	T	O	S	S	E
H	I	D									
S	Q	U	A	R	E	O	N	E	A	S	H
T	U	L	L	A	V	E	R	T	H	E	X
D	I	N	O	L	E	V	A	R	E	R	I
S	T	A	T	R	A	N	I	S	E	T	A

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Westin and Tropical Market Marriott Ocean Club....more soon!

Taj Mahal Restaurant, an authentic culinary excursion



When Bharat Shah, originally from India, but now a successful businessman in California, put on a spectacular wedding in Aruba for his daughter Lisa and her groom Kalpesh, they welcomed hundreds of friends and relatives from around the world, including the "old country."

When all the wedding guests had finally arrived in Aruba, Bharat hosted an official welcome party along the shore in Palm Beach, and he chose to have it catered by Taj Mahal restaurant, he was that impressed by their cuisine.

If you like your Indian food authentic, or are looking for a new and unique dining experience, an evening at Taj Mahal will deliver a memorable meal. A seemingly endless menu offers scores of choices for fish, chicken, lamb and vegetarian dishes that are "the real deal," discover that Indian food goes way beyond curry!

A taste-testing crew from THE MORNING NEWS chose a selection of their singular starters and two main courses with saffron rice, served family style, which provided a fine example of the versatility of their chef.

Taj Mahal's Tai Choice is a great way to start the meal and be initiated into the joys of Indian cuisine, offering a diverse selection of traditional favorites. It contains hearty portions of Pakoras, crispy vegetarian fritters, Aloo Tikki, potato cutlets, Chicken Tikka, tender chicken breast pieces seasoned just right, and shaped and seasoned ground lamb, charmingly dubbed "Sheik Kebabs." All is served on a bed of sliced onions and brought to your table on a sizzling platter, and you will want to dish those sautéed onions on to one of their tasty Indian breads called Naan, leaving behind not a single crumb. Main dishes are accompanied by a choice of rice, mixed vegetables rich with garlic, or Naan, plain, buttered, onion or garlic, and you will want to order an extra basket or two of this tasty delight, on

which you can spoon your main course, as well. Poori is crispy fried naan, and most definitely worth the extra two dollars to sample with your meal.

Our group also added an appetizer of crunchy Samosas, the Indian form of a potato knish, served with either cilantro or sweet and sour sauce. A platter of their Jhinga, large, crispy-fried shrimp in a delicate batter is ample enough to serve as a main course, though featured on their appetizer menu.

As we mentioned, main courses are served family style, in beautiful little pots that sit upon a candle to keep them warm. Our group sampled the "Mutton Saagwala," also known as "Lamb Shag" which is cooked in a thick sauce of yogurt and spinach, and the "Fish Hara Masala," moist, tender chunks of fish in a rich sauce featuring cilantro as the main flavoring. This is offered in mild, medium and very spicy, we found the medium quite spicy enough for us; it left a tingle on the tongue.

The family style service allows everyone at the table to sample a bit of this and that, and we heartily recommend you do, to truly appreciate this authentic bit of India in Aruba. Open for lunch and dinner, Taj Mahal sports a cozy and intimate air-conditioned dining room and a small outdoor terrace for those that enjoy dining al fresco. They have an exotic dessert menu to match, but our group was too stuffed to partake; there was even enough left to box up and provide a lunch next day for the lucky first person to get to it!

Located behind the Royal Plaza Mall, across from Aruba's Numismatic Museum, Taj Mahal offers a dining experience that is truly out of the ordinary; they feature an excellent and tasty selection for vegetarians too. If you are a fan of Indian food, or have been toying with trying it, Taj Mahal is the place for a very affordable dining experience and the real deal! Call 588-4494 for reservations.

Buster's is back in Eagle Beach at Trop Casino



The home of the Beer Pong drinking game

--Fans of Aruba's favorite sports bar are happy to hear that Buster's Garage has relocated to the restaurant/bar space inside Trop Casino. Now Eagle Beach resort guests have a great place for a bargain-priced breakfast or a bucket of beer while rooting for the team of their choice.

Buster's has that great,

homey feel of settling in to enjoy a game with buddies, greatly due to the warmth and enthusiasm of owner Rusty. He takes pride in making patrons feel welcome. "If somebody really needs to watch their home team on the field, we'll be happy to put it on for them," he confidently assured us.

"We have 3 satellite dishes

with separate packages to pick up every station imaginable. If there is a game going on out there somewhere, we'll find it."

With giant screens everywhere throughout the joint, there isn't a bad seat in the house. Aside from their all day menu of game-watching favorites, they also feature a hearty breakfast menu. The "Grand Slam Platter" includes eggs any style, pancakes or waffles, bacon, juice, fresh



Threesome, takes care of the entertainment

made home fries with coffee or tea for only \$9. Lunch and dinner menus reflect the same moderate pricing with required sports bar standards such as chicken wings, club sandwiches, burgers and a heaping helping of nachos, averaging \$9; pizza and main courses range from \$11 to \$15.

Aside from the games and the gambling, patrons can expect great entertainment three nights weekly with one of Aruba's most popular trios,

"Threesome." There are also some wild times getting acquainted with Rusty's Beer Pong, the Drinking Game of Champions. Win or lose, players always end up with a smile on their face.

This family friendly place, with air hockey and video games for the kids, along with a special menu for young ones, is open 7 days a week from 7:30 AM until 1:00 AM for late night snacking and fun.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

-- Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded get-



away; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community

of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold

Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the investment. To further en-

hance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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SPORT

Football: Pro Patria sanctioned after Boateng racist chants

ROME, (AFP) - The fourth division club whose fans caused Kevin-Prince Boateng to lead a walk-off of his AC Milan teammates in a friendly because of racist chants will play their next match behind closed doors, it was announced on Tuesday.

Boateng, a German-born Ghanaian international, has been hailed worldwide for his stance against racist fans of Pro Patria.

The governing body that runs third and fourth division football in Italy, the Lega Pro, reacted Tuesday by ordering that no fans be allowed to attend Pro Patria's upcoming match.

The behaviour of a group of Pro Patria fans was "of an extreme seriousness", the Lega Pro said.

What made the matter worse, it added, was that the discrimination came in a friendly and not a competitive match "which, without constituting a justification, could have been an extenuating circumstance".

The decision to make Pro Patria play behind closed doors was a stronger punishment than a previous 5,000-euro fine handed down earlier this season on the club, which the Lega Pro deemed had been "inefficient".

Rallying: Al-Attiyah wins again, Sainz falls away

AREQUIPA (AFP) - Qatari ace Nasser al-Attiyah (Buggy) won his second successive stage in this year's Dakar Rally as he triumphed in the fourth stage to give himself a great chance of adding to his triumph in the 2011 edition.

The 42-year-old driver - who made it four stage wins from four for his Red Bull Buggy team - closed the gap on the overall leader, France's Mini-driving 10-time champion Stephane Peterhansel.

Guerlain Chicherit took second in the stage, 36sec behind, while Peterhansel, 47, who has won the race six times on a motorbike and four times in the car discipline, came in over a minute behind the Qatari and saw his lead clipped to 5min 16sec.

However, it was not all good news for the Red Bull team as the 2010 winner Car-

los Sainz dropped out of contention with a second successive poor day, the winner of the first two stages suffering more problems with his car.

The Spaniard is now over three hours off the pace while another of the contenders American Robby Gordon, who was disqualified last year for his car not conforming to race regulations, also fell out of contention.

He attempted an ambitious manoeuvre and ended up with his car on its roof, losing more than two hours in the process.

Al-Attiyah, though, was all smiles when he emerged from his car.

"In the dunes at the start, it was very difficult to open the way, but in the end we are here without any problem at all and a good time as well so we are happy," said Al-Attiyah, who last year showed



his all round sporting skills by winning Olympic bronze in the shooting competition.

"Of course, we know that tomorrow (Tuesday) the terrain is going to be less easy for the buggies and we will probably lose a bit of time, but since it should be better for us in Chile, I'm not worried, especially since we are out in front and not far behind Peterhansel."

The motorbike section saw a change of hands in terms of the overall lead as Frenchman Olivier Pain took over from compatriot and four-time winner Cyril Despres.

The stage honours went to Spanish rider Joan Barreda Bort on a Husqvarna, who recorded his second stage win of this year's race in beating Pain by 8min 23sec while another Frenchman David Casteu was third.

Pain leads Casteu in the overall standings by 2min 24sec with defending champion Despres, dropping to third 3min 09sec adrift.



NAZCA (AFP) : US Robby Gordon (R) is pictured next to his Hummer in the sand during Stage 4 of the Dakar 2013 between Nazca and Arequipa, Peru, on January 8, 2013. The rally will take place in Peru, Argentina and Chile from January 5 to 20



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NBA: Short-handed Celtics down Knicks, Beal basket sees Wizards stun Thunder

NEW YORK (AFP) - The Boston Celtics coped admirably without suspended point guard Rajon Rondo on Monday as Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett came through in a 102-96 NBA victory over the New York Knicks.

Pierce scored 23 points on 10-of-18 shooting and Garnett contributed 19 points and 10 rebounds as the Celtics won their third straight.

Avery Bradley stood in for Rondo after the All-Star guard was banned for one game for bumping an official in a win at Atlanta on Saturday, scoring 13 points with five assists.

Jeff Green chipped in 16 points off the bench and the Celtics played tough defense to limit New York to 40.8 percent shooting.

Carmelo Anthony scored 20 points for New York, but shot just 6-of-26 from the field. His points total was his lowest since he scored 20 against Washington on November 30. Over New York's last 10 games he had averaged more than 34 points.

J.R. Smith finished with 24 points and Tyson Chandler had 13 along with 17 rebounds in the loss for the Atlantic Division-leading Knicks.

The Celtics have strung together three straight wins for just the second time this season. They also won three in a row from November 10-14.

While Bradley Beal on Washington found room with a pump fake then sank a game-winning jump shot with three-tenths of a second left Monday as the lowly Washington Wizards beat Oklahoma City 101-

99 in an NBA shocker.

Despite the absence of injured Jordan Crawford and Nene, the Wizards captured their fifth win of the season against 28 defeats.

Beal and Martell Webster both scored 22 points for the Wizards and Kevin Seraphin

chipped in 19.

Emeka Okafor notched a double-double with 12 points and 12 rebounds as Washington won for just the second time in their last 15 games. The Wizards had lost five in a row going into the game.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points with eight assists and seven rebounds for the Thunder, the Western Conference

leaders who had won five of six coming into the contest.

Serge Ibaka scored a career-high 26 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, while Russell Westbrook finished with 17 points and eight assists.

Despite lacking their top two scorers, the Wizards had built an 80-73 lead with 10:03 to play in the fourth quarter.

The Wizards stretched the margin to double digits, but the Thunder wouldn't go away.

Westbrook drained a three-pointer, and Durant snatched a steal and passed to Thabo Sefolosha for a dunk that pulled Oklahoma City to 94-90.

Webster was fouled making a three-pointer and converted the free-throw for a 99-94 Wizards lead, but with 36 seconds remaining Durant's three-pointer knotted the score at 99-99.

But Beal, a 19-year-old rookie, settled it, using the pump fake to evade two Thunder defenders then making his clutch shot.

Westbrook just had time to attempt a three-pointer, but it didn't fall.



Washington Wizards shooting guard Bradley Beal (3) makes the game-winning basket in the final second over Oklahoma City Thunder center Kendrick Perkins (5).

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MELBOURNE (AFP) - US tennis player Serena Williams (C) joins fitness fans at a sponsor's workout training club in Melbourne on January 8, 2013. Top tennis players are arriving in Melbourne in the lead up to the Australian Open which runs January 14-27.



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Football: Great prize night for Spanish stars



Spain's coach Vicente Del Bosque (R) receives the FIFA Men's Coach of the year award from Former Brazilian national coach Felipe Scolari during the FIFA Ballon d'Or awards ceremony at the Kongresshaus in Zurich on Monday.

MADRID (AFP) - Sports figures and media hailed a great night for Spanish football on Monday after Liga star Lionel Messi won a fourth Ballon d'Or and national coach Vicente Del Bosque was crowned coach of the year.

Messi is from Argentina, but his prize was in large part a reward for his prolific goal-scoring for Spanish league-leaders Barcelona.

Del Bosque's honour meanwhile recognised Spain's Euro 2012 triumph, which followed its 2010 World Cup win and

Despite being fiercely pro-

Real Madrid, leading sports journal Marca ran a headline reading "The best in history" on its website, above photographs of Messi at each of his four Ballon d'Or prizegivings.

It hailed Del Bosque's award as "A prize for Spanish football."

All three players on the shortlist for the world's best footballer award play in the Spanish league -- Messi, his Barca teammate Andres Iniesta and rival striker Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid.

In fact all of the top six

names in the final ranking that Messi topped were from La Liga teams.

In the FIFPro selection for the best 11-man line-up, meanwhile, six were Spaniards and all but two were from the Spanish league.

That selection included Ronaldo and three other Real players -- Iker Casillas, Sergio Ramos and Xabi Alonso -- plus Iniesta, Messi and two other Barcelona players, Gerard Pique and Xavi Hernandez.

The president of Barcelona, Sandro Rosell, said he was "very proud of our players and to be with Barcelona", the club said on its Twitter feed.

The president of the Spanish Royal Football Federation, Angel Villar, said Del Bosque's award was "a new prize for Spanish football that is going through some marvellous years."

Outside of the footballing sphere, Spanish tennis champion Rafael Nadal in Twitter messages congratulated Messi and Del Bosque.

"Congrats to Leo Messi for his new golden ball," he wrote. "It was difficult with two cracks like Iniesta and Cristiano."

"How proud I feel of Del Bosque, making history with this great squad," he added.

Football: Cup of Nations hosts South Africa disappoint



Siphiwe Tshabalal (R) of South Africa fights for the ball with Erik Huseklepp of Norway.

CAPE TOWN (AFP) - Goal-shy South Africa lost 1-0 against Norway Tuesday in their penultimate warm-up match before hosting the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations tournament.

Morocco-born Tarik Elyounoussi scored the winner four minutes before half-time, taking the ball across centre-backs Bongani Khumalo and Siyabonga Sangweni before slamming the ball wide of goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune.

It was a disappointing outcome for the 35,000 crowd at Cape Town Stadium on a balmy summer evening as they had high hopes of a home victory given that Norway fielded a weakened team that lacked most of their foreign-based

professionals.

Bafana Bafana (The Boys) once again squandered scoring chances -- notably when unmarked Katlego Mphela failed to control a through ball just before half-time -- and have netted only seven times in seven friendlies.

South Africa play Algeria at Orlando Stadium in Soweto Saturday and face Cape Verde Islands on January 19 in the Cup of Nations opener at the 90,000-capacity Soccer City stadium.

Norway, who lost away and won at home in previous games against South Africa, travel to Zambia for a match against the African champions Saturday in the mining town of Ndola.



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